

## West Virginia: STEM Update

In the [June 2018 edition of ARCC Momentum](#), we discussed West Virginia's Comprehensive Approach to STEM Education. Since then, the state has made considerable progress. According to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), "West Virginia is creating a statewide system of STEM support that prepares and inspires generations of learners to become leaders who meet the challenges of the state's emerging economy and contribute to the global society through innovation, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. This system of support will: (1) instill enthusiasm, interest, and engagement in STEM through personalized learning; (2) promote interdisciplinary STEM literacy across the curriculum; and (3) provide equitable access to STEM experiences, majors, and career pathways."

In 2018, Dr. Steven L. Paine, the State Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Jan Barth, the Assistant Superintendent, established a STEM Advisory Panel to conduct phase I of the initiative. The panel consisted of members of WVDE, representatives from institutions of higher education, members of the business community, ARCC staff, and various STEM leaders across the state. The panel included five working groups: computer science, workforce development, community engagement, PK-5 STEM learning, and 6-12 STEM learning. Each working group was assigned group-specific tasks to carry out during 2018.

At the close of 2018, phase II of the initiative began. To round out phase I, the working groups summarized their activities and outputs to inform the broader, comprehensive STEM vision put forth by WVDE. Each group submitted recommendations for continuing to unify and strengthen STEM education in West Virginia. Moving forward, WVDE leadership formed an advisory council to examine these recommendations and make decisions about future work in this area.

While there is still much to be done, West Virginia is on the way to making its goals a reality. All five working groups were able to deliver tangible outcomes and evidence-based recommendations to the Advisory Council. At the conclusion of this work, WVDE in collaboration with the working groups and advisory council, have three goals for this initiative:

- Graduate students from high school with increased STEM competencies, such as those associated with computer science, necessary for college and careers;
- Have educators with the confidence, knowledge, and skills to create engaging STEM learning environments; and

- Provide collaborative STEM initiatives with stakeholders that will result in the alignment of educational opportunities to business and industry needs to meet economic demands.

The ARCC will continue to support this work by offering technical assistance, consulting, meeting facilitation, and evidence-based resources and strategies for the STEM Advisory Council's consideration. It is anticipated that the council will meet regularly during 2019 and the ARCC will continue to assist WVDE in monitoring the status of the initiative.